

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 51

Adopted in Senate July 17, 1997

Secretary of the Senate

Adopted in Assembly July 24, 1997

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

This resolution was received by the Secretary of
State this____ day of _____, 1997,
at ____o'clock __M.

Deputy Secretary of State

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RESOLUTION CHAPTER ____

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 51—Relative to the Nisei Baseball Leagues.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 51, Costa. Nisei baseball: hall of fame.

This measure would request that the Nisei Baseball Leagues be honored with a permanent exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

WHEREAS, The sport of baseball, universally known as America's national pastime, is rich with stories, legends, history, and culture; and

WHEREAS, Although not widely known in this country until recent years, the Japanese American community has contributed a significant chapter to the history of baseball that parallels its rich contributions to the heritage of American society and the foundations on which this country stands; and

WHEREAS, Beginning at the turn of the 20th century, "Issei", or first-generation Japanese Americans, cultivated a love for the game of baseball that eventually led to the development of an extensive, highly regarded network of separate, Japanese American leagues throughout the United States that competed in both this country and abroad; and

WHEREAS, By the 1920's, more than 100 teams had been formed, consisting primarily of talented "Nisei," or second-generation Japanese Americans, who proudly continued the passionate baseball tradition of their Issei forefathers; and

WHEREAS, Though the world-class Nisei teams, like the teams in the Negro Leagues and in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball Leagues, played mostly against each other in response to the discrimination and segregation they faced in their daily lives, they also successfully competed against high school, college, and



semiprofessional teams from white America, teams from the Negro Leagues, and even barnstorming teams led by professional baseball legends like Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Ted Williams, Jackie Robinson, and Joe DiMaggio; and

WHEREAS, In 1937, all-star teams consisting of Nisei players from central and northern California traveled to Japan, Korea, and Manchuria, as ambassadors of good will, where they impressed audiences with their competitive spirit, sportsmanship, and talented, aggressive style of fast-paced American baseball; and

WHEREAS, Later, during the days of internment during World War II, the passion of these skillful Japanese American players kept the national pastime alive, poignantly evidenced by the fact that Gila River, one of 10 internment camps, had 3 divisions and 28 teams; and

WHEREAS, After World War II, many Nisei players pursued their dreams of professional baseball in Japan, and in so doing, helped to promote cultural exchanges and visits of American major league teams and players; and

WHEREAS, In spite of this rich tradition and history, the popularity of the Nisei Baseball Leagues gradually faded as discrimination and segregated sports eased in American society, until the Leagues almost disappeared altogether in the early 1970's; and

WHEREAS, That rich history has, in recent years, fortunately been rediscovered for the benefit of all Americans, through, among other things, historical exhibits like "Diamonds in the Rough: Japanese Americans in Baseball," a project jointly curated by the Nisei Baseball Research Project, the National Japanese American Historical Society, the California State Capitol Museum, and the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, on tour through the United States and currently on display at the California State Capitol Museum; and

WHEREAS, This fascinating exhibit includes rare photographs, personal artifacts, and historical documents about the history of Japanese Americans in the sport of baseball, and celebrates the legacy of the great Nisei



players and the development of the Nisei Baseball Leagues in the face of discrimination and hardship during that time; and

WHEREAS, In honor of their contribution to baseball, the Nisei Baseball Leagues should rightfully have a permanent exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, a proposal supported by, among others, the San Francisco Giants, Los Angeles Dodgers, and San Diego Padres; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Nisei Baseball Leagues should be recognized and rightfully honored for their contribution to the game of baseball by having a permanent exhibit on display at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit forthwith copies of this resolution to the President of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and the Commissioner of Baseball.



Attest:

Secretary of State

